



**Director of
Central
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CHINA - MIDDLE EAST: Attacking US Policies

China is increasing its public criticism of US actions relating to the crisis in Lebanon and for the first time in several years has directly denounced US mediation efforts in the region. In the past, Chinese commentary acknowledged the Camp David process, but Beijing now claims that Washington has shifted its policy radically and is giving full-fledged backing to Israel. Moreover, a rare government statement condemned "US complicity" in the Israeli invasion, and the Chinese later publicized their provision of relief funds to the PLO.

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Comment: China's public stance, including its reduced attention to possible Soviet meddling in the crisis, suggests Beijing currently sees little, if any, common ground for cooperation with the US in the Middle East. Chinese influence in the region is limited, and Beijing is frustrated by the damage done to the PLO--one of China's few avenues for involvement in the area.

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SOUTH AFRICA - ZIMBABWE: Improved Relations

Relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe, which reached a low point late last year, are now being conducted more pragmatically. Pretoria is aiding in transporting fuel to Zimbabwe and is exchanging visits of high-level officials.

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1 Comment: South Africa's pursuit of cooperative policies toward Zimbabwe reflects a sensitivity to US preferences. Relations could quickly sour again, however, over such issues as the negotiations on Namibia or Prime Minister Mugabe's vocal support for black South African nationalists. Harare's opposition to apartheid policies bars any permanent improvement in relations.

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